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STATINTL

Gadfly Of The Senate

SEN. STEPHEN M. YOUNG, peppery critic of governmental affairs which most of his colleagues consider above criticism, is reported to be in the White House doghouse again for raising a ruckus over the budget of the Central Intelligence Agency, which no one is supposed to know about or question.

In a speech he made before Congress adjourned, calling for a joint congressional committee to keep a rein on the CIA, he said:

"Today (almost 20 years after it was established), this agency with thousands upon thousands of employees spends more money than the State Department and at times has more real influence on important matters of foreign policy."

That Senator Young would be one man in Washington who would challenge the ultra-hush-hush CIA, the millions upon millions it spends in secret, and the hidden power it wields was to be expected on the basis of his record.

Ever since he has been in the Senate, he has fought, with considerable success, to curb the waste of public funds on civil defense projects which gave little promise of making this nation more secure.

At the last session, he exposed as balderdash the argument that the United States should not sign a consular treaty with the Soviet Union because it would permit more Communist spies to enter this country.

In all of our embassies overseas, Senator Young bluntly stated, we have CIA operatives, or spies, who are listed as officials of the embassy. But calling that situation a fact of life in the cold war, he said: "We can play the game as well as any."

To make sure that this country does so, however, requires a watchdog committee of Congress to keep track of CIA activities and expenditures, which he demands.

It would be the appropriate body to look into Senator Young's latest charges that hundreds of CIA officials are now in Viet Nam and Thailand operating on their own --and confusing further that tangled situation which our air force, navy, marine, and army intelligence officers could handle better.

In the House there is Rep. John J. Rooney, a member of the appropriations committee, who watches over every bottle of beer that our State Department people use in diplomatic relations. But there is literally no one to prevent the CIA, which spends more money than the State Department, from running wild in its operations.

Yet this is the agency that can get us into a major war almost by itself.

Here in Ohio it is often said that Senator Young--running in the 1958 right-to-work Democratic sweep and in the 1964 Johnson landslide--is lucky to get elected. Maybe so.

But from the way he conducts himself in Washington on matters of state most of his colleagues prefer to duck. The American people are equally lucky that he does get elected.